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great as he afterwards became, and overwhelming as was the world's applause, the loss of those near and dear to him gave such repeated shocks to his sensitive mind, that many of the hours of his artistic triumph were clouded with anxiety and grief, and embittered with the thought that the loving and loved companions of his youth could no longer yield him that sympathy and advice which seemed as necessary to his existence as the air he breathed.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CHOIR.

THE first concert of the present season took place on Thursday, the 17th ult., at St. James's Hall. We have so frequently called attention to the excessive delicacy with which the compositions sung by this choir are invariably given, that we have little to add to our previous remarks on the present occasion. The programme was interesting on account of some clever madrigals by Mr. R. L. Pearsall and Mr. John Barnett, being mixed with so genuine a specimen of the old school as "Stay Corydon," by John Wilbye. Something in the words and music of the true madrigal seems to belong to a time long passed by; and although we listen with pleasure to such modern imitations as those given at this concert, we cannot but feel that they resemble those modern antiques which enthusiastic antiquaries love to build in their grounds, so that they may gratify themselves by looking backward, rather than forward, in their daily life. The "part-song" which, without wishing to disturb the madrigal as a pure specimen of a certain time and school, seems more in accordance with our present musical requirements is, we think, destined to supersede that quaint form of composition so successfully carried out in this country, at a time when the art was still struggling for life and freedom. Much interest was excited on this occasion by the performance of Spohr's *Ode to St. Cecilia*, for soprano and chorus with organ accompaniment, which was excellently given, Madame Lemmens Sherrington sustaining most ably the soprano solo. This composition, containing all the beauties of the style of this great master, contains also much of his mannerism; and rich as it is throughout in harmony, the ear seems to seek that repose which is essential to a work of this nature. A four-part song by Mr. Henry Smart, "Waken, lords and ladies gay" (Hunting Song), was sung for the first time; and is destined to add one more to the many charming compositions of its class which this composer has written; somewhat Mendelssohnian in character, it contains the elements of popularity, whilst appealing also to the educated musician. It was sung to perfection, and was much applauded. Madame Sherrington also sang a pleasing song of Mr. Leslie's, called "The Lark's message," exceedingly well, and also an air of Auber's, which was admirably suited to her voice and style. The instrumental performers were Herr Blumner (pianoforte), and M. Lotto (violin), the first of whom played Beethoven's "Thirty-three variations on a theme in C minor," and the latter a piece by Leonhard, and Paganini's "Witches' Dance." Altogether this was a most attractive concert, and Mr. Leslie deserves every praise for the spirited manner in which he carries on his enterprise.

SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.

ON Friday, the 11th ult., the Christmas performances of the *Messiah* commenced, before a densely crowded audience. The wonderful progress the chorus of the society has made, was never more conspicuously displayed than on this occasion; and we doubt whether a finer performance of Handel's finest work was ever given. It may be supposed that the first appearance of Mr. Sims Reeves added materially to the attraction of the oratorio; and certainly, whether from a long rest, or from an earnest

desire to compensate for his absence, we never heard him in finer voice. Madame Parepa, and Madame Sainton Dolby, Mr. Renwick (who, with a fine voice, is still a student), and Mr. Patey, were the other vocalists. Mr. T. Harper's accompaniment to "The trumpet shall sound," was, as usual, one of the great features of the evening.

On the following Friday the *Messiah* was repeated with the same vocalists.

NATIONAL CHORAL SOCIETY.

THE performances of this society have commenced for the season, under the direction of Mr. G. W. Martin. The first oratorio, *Judas Maccabæus*, deserves especial mention, from the fact of Mr. W. H. Cummings having undertaken the tenor part, which was to have been sung by Mr. Sims Reeves, at a very short notice. On his own merits, Mr. Cummings fully deserved the hearty applause with which he was greeted; and the effect he created in "Sound an Alarm," may fairly warrant him in the belief that he is destined to take rank as a sound oratorio singer. Exeter Hall was crowded; and the chorus, on the whole, showed unmistakeable signs of careful training. On Wednesday, the 16th ult., the Christmas performance of the *Messiah* was given, the principal vocalists being Miss Emily Spiller, Miss Palmer, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Thomas.

THE THREE-CHOIR FESTIVAL FOR 1864.

THIS Triennial Musical Festival of the United Choirs of Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester, will be this year held in Hereford; and promises to be one of the very best that has yet taken place. The Dean and Chapter have already granted the use of the Cathedral; and a great improvement will be effected by placing the orchestra at the west end, thus securing a more ample accommodation for the public than has been the case at any former festival. The evening concerts at the Shire Hall, too, will be rendered doubly attractive by the fact of a new orchestra having been erected, and other important alterations having been carried out, with the view of aiding the effect of the music, and the comfort of the audience. Mr. G. Townshend Smith, whose exertions in promoting the success of these meetings are so well known and appreciated, has resolved on this occasion to increase the number of stewards to fifty; and when we announce that forty-five of them have already accepted the office, it will be seen how large an amount of interest is felt in the undertaking. The following is a list of those who have given in their names:—The Right Hon. the Lord Bateman, Lord Lieutenant (second time); the Right Hon. the Earl Somers; the Right Hon. and Ven. the Lord Saye and Sele, D.C.L. (second time); the Right Hon. the Lord Northwick; the Right Hon. and Rev. G. Herbert, Clun (second time); the Hon. Colonel Windsor Clive, M.P., Hewell Grange, Bromsgrove; the Hon. P. Wyndham, M.P., 44, Belgrave-square, London; Sir V. Cornewall, Bart., Moccas Court (second time); Sir W. Curtis, Bart., Cainham Court (third time); Sir J. Russell Bailey, Bart., Glanusk Park; Admiral Sir T. Hastings, C.B., Titley Court (second time); J. King King, Esq., M.P., Staunton Park (second time); H. Mildmay, Esq., M.P., Gayton Hall (second time); Col. Clifford, M.P., Llancilio (second time); G. Glive, Esq., M.P., Perrystone (second time); G. Hardy, Esq., M.P., Hempsted Park, Staplehurst; the Mayor of Hereford, E. Pateshall, Esq., Pool House; J. H. Arkwright, Esq., Hampton Court (fourth time), R. Arkwright, Esq., 3, Eaton-place, West, London; F. L. Bodenham, Esq., Hereford (second time); Rev. J. Burdon, English Bicknor; W. H. Cooke, Esq., Q.C., 42, Wimpole-street, London; Rev. G. Cornewall, Moccas; Rev. G. Davenport, Foxley; T. Evans, Esq., Sufton Court (second time); J. Freeman, Esq., Gaines (second time); Rev. E. R. Hampden, Cradley (second time); Rev. E. B. Hawkshaw, Weston (second time); R. Hereford, Esq.,

the Moor (second time); T. Heywood, jun., Esq., Rockfield; Rev. H. T. Hill, Felton; C. W. Hoskyns, Esq., Harewood; Rev. E. Howells, Custos of the College; Rev. W. Hulme, Brampton Abbots; Rev. Canon Huntingford, Hampton Bishop (second time); Rev. Prebendary Johnson, Byford (second time); R. Johnson, Esq., Hereford; Rev. H. C. Key, Stretton (second time); R. Lee Warner, Esq., Tiberton Court; B. Leighton, Esq., Loton Park; Rev. T. J. Longworth, Bromfield; J. Phillips, Esq., Bryngwyn; Rev. Prebendary Poole, Hentland (second time); Capt. Manley Power, Hill Court; R. Webb, Esq., Donnington Hall (second time); George Yapp, Esq., Cradley.

MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.

MADAME ARABELLA GODDARD has now replaced M. Hallé at the pianoforte; playing, on her first appearance, Mendelssohn's solo sonata, which is ever welcome, not only on account of its own intrinsic merits, but as an instance of the wonderful creative power which its composer, a mere boy when it was written, dared to throw into a form which Beethoven had already developed to an extent previously unthought of. At the second concert at which Madame Goddard performed, she created quite an effect in Weber's sonata in C major, taking the last movement (well known to agile amateur pianists as the "moto continuo") at a speed which only her wonderful executive powers could justify. Her performance of Woelff's sonata "Ne plus ultra," with the variations on "Life let us cherish," (which she introduced on her third appearance) is too well known to need comment. It has been often played and often applauded at these concerts; and is, we presume, looked for as an annual. M. Lotto has held the place of first violin during the month, and has evidently established himself in the favour of the audience. His best performances have been in Beethoven's quartett in A, No. 5, Op. 18; and in Dussek's sonata in B flat (No. 1, Op. 69) for pianoforte and violin, with Madame Goddard. We confess to have had enough of his favorite solo "La trille du diable," which has been twice played, and must, therefore, have fully satisfied those Tartini lovers for whom we presume it has been repeated. The vocal music seems chosen with little care; and, indeed, the effect to the audience is that each singer sings what he or she may like best. In concerts which have done so much for the spread of good music, we should be glad to see not only a judicious power exercised in selecting the compositions to be performed, but a programme properly balanced and duly considered in all its proportions.

THE MOTETT CHOIR.

THE prospectus for the present season has been issued, and the operations of the Choir opened by a concert on the 22nd ult. If the programme of that evening may be taken as a specimen of the present design of the Choir, it appears that modern anthems by Goss, E. J. Hopkins, Elvey, &c., obtain a hearing, as well as the severer school of Palestrina. However clever and really fine the latter may be, it is not possible that a Society could be supported for the exclusive performance of that music. The past history of the Choir shews this. In our opinion they will be doing a better work in art, by combining with the founders of church music, those that have made use of their predecessors' experience, and have adapted to that experience the increased powers of melody and harmony of modern times. We owe everything to the old contrapuntists, as much as painters owe to the predecessors of Raphael, or poets to Chaucer and Spenser. We can best show our obligation to them by exhibiting, in contrast, what they did, and what has been done by their legitimate successors in art. This, in fact, seems to have been the design of the programme of the first concert of the Motett Choir. The first part consisted of a Mass in C for six voices, by Palestrina; Christmas Carols, and Anthems by

Vittoria and Croce, as well as by Goss, Hopkins, and Elvey, formed the second part. The choir was somewhat unsteady in the first part of the Mass, the close imitations and unaccustomed harmonies rendering the music very difficult. On the whole, however, the performance was very creditable, and showed that great pains and care had been taken by the Honorary Precentor, the Rev. T. Helmore.

Miss Agnes Zimmermann, a young pianist from the Royal Academy of Music, made a most successful appearance at a concert at the Crystal Palace during the last month. In the Andante and Rondo of Beethoven's concerto in E flat, she fully proved that she had been educated in a good school, and she was warmly and deservedly applauded throughout the performance.

At a meeting of the committee of the Birmingham Musical Festival, held last week, it was resolved that the next triennial celebration shall take place on Tuesday, the 6th of September, and three following days, in the forthcoming year, and that Mr. Costa be appointed conductor of the festival.

THALBERG gave his farewell concert, at Richmond, on Saturday, the 19th ult., and left on Monday for Naples. It is said that the provincial tours of 1862 and 1863, in England, Ireland, and Scotland, have yielded a net profit of some eight or ten thousand pounds.

WE learn with much satisfaction that the late Signor Begrez, formerly well known as a vocalist at the Opera, has bequeathed the munificent sum of £1000 to that excellent charity the Royal Society of Musicians, with the earnest desire that it shall form the nucleus of a fund for the foundation of a college for poor and decayed members of the profession, similar to the Royal Dramatic College.

WE have received a neat little tablet, published by John Towers, of Manchester, the object of which is to facilitate the learning of the signatures of each major and minor key. We remember to have bought precisely the same thing in London some years ago, which had the name of Armin Fröh, Dresden, upon it; but being good for the purpose intended, it is none the worse for not being new.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

ALLOA.—On Tuesday evening, the 24th Nov., the Harmonic Society gave a grand concert of vocal music in the Corn Exchange. Miss Helen Kirk, Mr. A. G. Vance and Mr. Cowie were the soloists. The society numbers about sixty voices, conducted by Mr. David Melville.

AMPTHILL.—The choir of the parish church, under the direction of Mr. W. S. Day, gave a musical entertainment in the National School-room on November 20th.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.—The Gentlemen's Glee-Club gave a grand concert in the Town Hall, on Monday evening, the 7th ult., to a large and fashionable audience. The